

Border 2012  
California/Baja California Regional Workgroup  
San Diego State University  
Calexico, CA  
May 29, 2003

1. The meeting started at 11:10 with an attendance of about 120 participants.
2. Carlos Escalante, Fire Chief for the City of Calexico, welcomed participants on behalf of the City of Calexico.
3. Workgroup co-chairs in attendance were:
  - C Carlos de la Parra, Mexico's Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources, (SEMARNAT), Baja California
  - C Jorge Escobar Martinez, Directorate of Ecology for the State of Baja California
  - C Winston Hickox, California Environmental Agency, (CAL-EPA)
  - C Laura Yoshii, US Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA).
4. Overview and opening remarks:
  - C Carlos de la Parra, welcomed everyone on behalf of SEMARNAT and emphasized that he was pleased that Border 2012 is a regional project, with regional objectives.
  - C Jorge Escobar Martinez, remarked on the importance of the state being involved in the planning and implementation of the program. He said that the citizens of Baja California are looking forward to finding solutions to the problems that affect the environment.
  - C Winston Hickox, said that the State of California is committed to dealing with the environmental problems and resources of the border. He noted that this meeting is the first meeting between California and Baja California officials. He expressed: "we are getting along better so that we can find solutions to regional problems like, air quality, water quality, it is very gratifying to work together". He also mentioned that he was very pleased with the wonderful turnout.
  - C Laura Yoshii, emphasized that this meeting was in fact the first meeting of Border 2012. Both California and Baja California have developed a shared vision on specific areas that need improvement. We know the areas that we want to make progress on. She explained that this meeting was going to give participants an overview of how to organize to be more productive. The objective of Border 2012 was to focus on results, emphasizing the implementation of tools and mechanisms to get results. Border 2012 was launched on April 4, 2003 with federal and state collaboration. One of the principal goals is that people closest to the problems must be involved in the solution of problems such as water contamination, air pollution, land contamination, improvement of environmental health, and reducing exposure to chemical contamination.

5. A seven-minute video was presented dealing with the main issues and projects of Border 2012.
6. Review of ongoing projects, California and Baja California:
  - C Arturo Arano, from the Ecology Department of Baja California, presented an overview of ongoing projects at State level.
    - C The state of Baja California is focusing on: water quality control and prevention, air quality control and prevention, non-toxic solid waste, and used tires.
    - C Ongoing Water projects:
      - C Sewer/drain pipes from Tijuana to Rosarito.
      - C Sanitation of 100% of the urban residual water.
      - C 100 % of treated water by 2003.
      - C 100 % sewer/drain pipes by 2003.
      - C Full water supply at high demand peak hours.
      - C Construction of water treatment plant and augmenting the network of sewer lines.
      - C Rehabilitation of the San Antonio de los Buenos water treatment plant.
      - C Instrumentation of programs of pre-treatment for residual industrial waters.
      - C Monitoring the drainage and sewage systems of the border cities to detect areas of high concentration of contaminants so that samples can be analyzed locally instead of being sent to San Diego. We will analyze and treat the problem here in Baja California.
      - C State Hydraulics Program.
      - C Ensenada's desalinization water plant.
      - C Re-cycling residual waters.
    - C Ongoing Air quality projects:
      - C Evaluation of advances in air quality.
      - C Smog check program for all vehicles.
      - C Official State's Vehicles Regularization.
      - C Integrated Program of street paving and air quality.
      - C Better environmental quality.
  - C Claudia Villacorta from CAL-EPA, presented an overview of ongoing projects as follows:
    - C Watershed monitoring programs, Tijuana River Watershed
    - C Ocean monitoring programs from San Diego Cove to San Antonio de los Buenos, tracking of sewage and storm water.
    - C CODAR monitoring program.

- C New River monitoring program (collect and analyze samples for pollutants).
- C Air Emissions monitoring program ( Locations: San Diego and Tijuana, Calexico and Mexicali, Tecate).
- C Vehicle emission inspection program. Smog check station in Tijuana.
- C Contingency planning and emergency response.
- C Waste tire pile, and fire prevention assessment.
- C Environmental education, binational environmental curriculum to be given to elementary teachers.

7. Regional work groups operations:

- C Carlos de la Parra, SEMARNAT presented the roles and responsibilities of the regional work groups and task forces:
  - C Roles and Responsibilities of Regional Work Groups
    - C To identify and prioritize regional environmental issues.
    - C Define priorities from the ground up in the task forces.
    - C Designate task forces and leadership to work on regional environmental issues.
    - C Refer issues that have Border wide implications to border wide workgroups and policy forum.
  - C Communication and coordination roles of Regional Work Groups
    - C Determine mechanisms needed to coordinate with U.S. tribes and indigenous communities in Mexico. (In Mexicali, on May 28 the first meeting took place between U.S., tribes and Mexican indigenous communities to determine how they can get involved in Border 2012 projects).
    - C Workgroups co-chairs communicate and coordinate with other Border 2012 task forces.
    - C Co-participation in a regional workgroup website.
    - C Regional Workgroup Newsletter.
    - C Task Force Workshops.
    - C Adhere to the 30 day public notice period.
  - C Public Participation:
    - C Stakeholders representation in task force.
    - C One day bilingual sessions.
    - C Define roles, responsibilities and resources for task force leadership.
    - C Consensus, building and conflict resolutions.
  - C Task Forces Role: To coordinate actions, conduct projects.
  - C Task Forces Composition: Public, private, social participation, municipal authorities, state authorities
  - C Regional Workgroups Role: Overseeing and coordinate task forces.

8. Funding opportunities:

- C Gary Wolensky presented the funding opportunities available for projects in the framework of Border 2012. The request for B2012 proposals will be posted by August. He highlighted the terms and conditions for proposals to be considered as follows:

- C Annual award cycle.
- C Transparency in decision making.
- C Improve budget planning.
- C Eligibility Criteria: Proposals will be accepted from local and states governments, academia.
- C Competitive Process.
- C Annual Solicitation.
- C Review ranking facts, to fill B2012 objectives, in measurable results
- C EPA to make final decision in consultation with the RWG Co-Chairs.

Laura Yoshii explained the there are modest resources to kick start the program and that other ways to find support must be considered. Creativity is a must.

#### 9. Question and Answer Session:

- C Environmental Education Exchange from Tucson asked: What do you expect form the task force and how to apply for funds? Laura Yoshii answered: To work within the communities; the groups interested in funding make the proposal through the task force.
- C Law Student asked: EPA makes decisions for the grants based on what? Laura Yoshii answered that the workgroup was developing criteria of most critical problems to be addressed. She projects that achieve the goals of B2012.
- C Question: How are the task forces and the public going to work together? Carlos de la Parra answered: The task force should be integrated by local officials (municipal, State and Federal), academia, citizens, and other community sectors and always try to expand public participation. The public has the advantage of knowing what the local problems are. Stakeholders working with governmental agencies will ensure sure that the goals of B2012 will be met.
- C Question: How are the tribes being included in B2012? Answer: It is very important that the tribes be included in the task force. The tribes know the problems first hand, and tribal representatives can be part of the leadership of the task force.
- C Question: How can we start a task force? This is a key question; you have to start with local priorities, like air and solid and hazardous waste. We need to identify what the local problems are; we don't know yet because we don't have the input.
- C Winston Hickox of Cal-EPA said that pollution problems and priorities between both states are vast; we have to figure how many task forces we want; what do we need to work on: and how to go about working on the different task forces. We need to come up with different ideas between us and what the priorities are, to star getting the task forces into place.

#### 10 **Lunch Recess. The meeting reconvened at 2:00 to hear an update from Border 2012 Partners.**

11. Update from border 2012 partners.

C Javier Cabrera. Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC)

- C This BECC was created by both governments; we work within 100 km (62m) north and south of along the border, working on different projects like, air quality, transportation, hazardous waste, clean and efficient energy, water and wastewater.
- C Our next priority is forming a Board that includes officials from both BECC and the North American Development Bank.
- C We use our Commission resources to give technical assistance for those communities that need it. We have 72 projects right now, 42 in de U.S., and 30 in Mexico, with a 1.7 billion budget for all 72 projects.
- C How is BECC going to fit in B2012? BECC can do more in B2012 that what has already been mentioned. For example:
  - C Advice, management, border wide strategic plan, coordination, logistics, develop projects with task forces.
  - C Specific goals are: water conservation and efficiency, hazardous waste removal, providing technical information.
  - C Binational strategy planning. If we don't identify the problems from a binational point of view, it will be difficult to correct them.
  - C Identify resources.
  - C Identification of financial resources, mechanisms to finance projects efficiently.
  - C Evaluating obstacles to development. Efficiency of maintaining plan continuity.

18. The North American Development Bank and the Southwest Center for Environmental Research and Policy presented the update on the agencies work, followed by an open session discussing priorities.

**13, Open discussion on priorities**

- C Ronald Grass from Imperial Valley asked about the new power plant in Mexicali and the pollution that comes with it. Carlos de la Parra, SEMARNAT answered: The emission in the plant in Mexicali is on par with U.S. standards. The "Licence Ambiental Unica" ("Single Environmental License") that the federal government issued to the plant is of the highest standard. There are using advanced technology that has less impact on the environment.

Winston Hickox also said: Trying to deal with these problems brings into play the issue of sovereignty. In a conversation with Victor Lichtinger from SEMARNAT in Mexico City, he stated that power plants along the border that are going to sell to the U.S. will operate according to the U.S. standards, and plants in Mexico that are going to sell to Mexico, will operate according with Mexican Law. The New River is a big threat to human health. That will be a priority..

- C Juan Guerrero asked about agricultural pollution? He said that we need education and need to find different solutions to the agricultural problems, such as field stubble burning, which impacts air quality. We need to do something else that has less impact

but provides the same result in the Imperial Valley and also in the Mexicali Valley. Perhaps a joint program with UABC could be started.

- C Reina Prom, Instituto de Ingenieria de la UABC said: U.S. sells cars in bad condition to México and also exports tires that could not be used in the States.
- C Other issues identified by participants as priorities included:
  - C Binational Habitat Corridor.
  - C Bi-national water/air sheds.
  - C Toxic waste in the maquiladoras
  - C Metales y Derivados in Tijuana is one of the abandoned hazardous waste sites in the border region.
- C We need more communication between both cities. Calexico and Mexicali.
- C UABC Ensenada. Reuse of treated wastewater that is discharged to the sea; the desalination plant in Ensenada is too costly; we need experts to help us to manage our sewage.
- C Tribal priorities. The Torres Martinez Tribe representative expressed the concerns/priorities of the tribe:
  - C Regional notification of meeting.
  - C Pollutants like lead and pesticides.
  - C Migrant workers that live on tribal land.
  - C Concerned of health issues related to aerial sprays.
  - C Emergency response for hazardous materials that go through tribal land.
  - C Air programs, air monitoring.
  - C Regulation of contaminants in the Colorado River, water that we use.
  - C Solid Waste management.
  - C Tribal co-chair in the regional workgroups.
- C The Torres Martinez representative said that the tribe is a sovereignty nation and they want to be treated like one. They requested timely notification of meetings. Other concerns of the tribe are:
  - C Water/swage infrastructure.
  - C Water/electricity to tribal land.
  - C Unregulated housing causes environmental issues.
  - C Air pollution/air quality
- C The Torres Martinez representatives expressed her disappointment that no CAL-EPA representatives were at the meeting of tribes that took place in Mexicali the day before.
- C Winston Hickox explained that going out of state and out of the country requires approval, no matter if there is a cost or not, approval has to follow a chain of command and apologized for not being there.
- C Jose Rosario Osuna, President of the Indigenous Council, A.C. representative of the Tribes in the Mexican Border area, presented the results of the first ever meeting on environmental issues of indigenous peoples from both sides of the border. He said: Yesterday May 28th, we had the first meeting between tribes from both sides of the border. The U.S. tribes that were represented were Cucapás, Kumai and Iwapai; from the indigenous peoples of Mexico, we had representatives from the Cucapás, Kiliwas, Pai pai, Yaquis y Triquis as well as representatives from SEMARNAT and INI.

At the meeting and according to the principles guiding Border2012 Program we agreed on the following issues to be included as our agenda:

- C About our participation in Border 2012
  - C Community workshops to inform tribe members about Border 2012.
  - C Transportation to the meetings.
  - C To review the pertinent legal framework to facilitate the sharing of machinery and goods for the benefit of the indigenous peoples.
- C About production alternatives for the sustainable usage of natural resources:
  - C Establishing indigenous species nurseries for traditional and commercial use.
  - C To find ways of selling indigenous production.
  - C To establish environmental management units for the reproduction of native flora and fauna.
- C About Health and environment
  - C Implement measures of supervision and control on the usage of chemical agricultural products.
  - C Studies on agricultural areas to measure the level of contamination of water, land and the quality of air.
  - C Health surveys for the agricultural laborer population.
  - C Studies on the quality of household water in the Kumai-Cucapa communities of Mexico.
  - C Infra-structure improvement: housing, water and power.
- C Specific concerns was strongly expressed at the meeting having to do with the Colorado River Delta:
  - C Restore volume and quality of water to the Colorado River.
  - C Restore the Colorado River Delta.
  - C Reforestation of the Colorado River Delta with indigenous species.
  - C Conduct studies on the contamination levels of the Colorado River.
- C Pro Peninsula suggested that the Environmental Education Council of the Californias could be a task force.

### 13. Task Force Models.

- C Kimberly Collins (US Co-Chair) on behalf of the Imperial and Mexicali Clean Air Stakeholders (IMECAS), (Interesados en el Aire Limpio de Imperial y Mexicali):
  - C Key Issues in the Region:
    - C Region is non-attainment for Particulate matter smaller than 10 microns (PM10), carbon monoxide (CO) and ozone (O3).
    - C One of the highest rates of childhood asthma cases in the State of California.
    - C Large old motor vehicle fleet.
    - C Dust related to unpaved roads and desert and farming conditions.
    - C Burning of agricultural fields and trash.
    - C Growing region with new industrial development in the region.
  - C Characteristics of the Airshed:
    - C We are dealing with two countries and two states and two local governments

- C Challenges include:
  - C Different cultural, political and economic factors
  - C Making hard decisions in order to find a balance between the region's economic development goals with current and future environmental concerns.
  - C Rapid industrial and population growth that has outpaced the supporting infrastructure.
  - C Winter inversion layer, trapping and build up of pollutants.
  
- C IMECAS/AILMEX was formed when community members came together 2 years ago to figure out sustainable solutions to the air quality problems in the region. The group's organizational structure is based upon El Paso del Norte Joint Advisory Committee and the San Diego-Tijuana Binational Air Quality Alliance. It is formed by 30 members representing both the US and Mexico (15 from each country). It includes representatives from the Federal, State and local governments as well as members from Industry, Academia and Non Governmental Organizations. It has 2 co-chairs 1 from each country, meets bimonthly and the meetings are open to the public.
  
- C IMECAS/AILMEX purpose states: The Imperial and Mexicali Clean Air Stakeholders Group has been organized exclusively for public purposes to improve the air quality and health of the citizens residing in the Imperial, California/Mexicali, Baja California Air Basin.
  
- C IMECAS/AILMEX objective is: To serve in an advisory capacity to the agencies which have jurisdiction in this area, to serve as a public forum for the discussion of air quality issued in the airshed, to advocate clean air in the basin for the betterment of health, and to support individuals doing projects related to air quality and/or related to health issues.
  
- C IMECAS/AILMEX scope of activities include: Serve as a forum of discussion of public policy concerning air quality and related health impacts; Facilitate the planning, communication and coordination among all organizations interested in improving air quality as well as assisting those whose health is adversely impacted by air pollution; monitor the progress of organizations responsible for improving air quality; procure funds from local, state, national and international organizations for air quality and related health projects; educate the public on air quality, and foster awareness of air quality issues and related health issues; develop joint studies on air pollution, and air quality; seek similar and accurate information on both sides of the border; education and communication; developing the initiative to improve air quality in the region.
  
- C Current projects: IMECAS/AILMEX is currently working in:
  - C Developing mechanisms to provide real time air quality data in the region;
  - C Educating the stakeholders on air quality issues pertinent to the region;
  - C Developing IMECAS infrastructure, and



- C One airshed initiative.
  
- C John Rothman (USEPA), California/Baja Environmental Protections and Enforcement Task Force.
  - C The task force started in early 1990's forming regional groups meeting across established lines. Governments officials need to talk to the people that are living with the problems. The task-force should be an advocate for the projects rather than for their respective agency. Bureaucracies tend to be limited by their own nature.
  
- C Eugenia McNaughton (USEPA) - Proposal for Water Task Forces
  - C Under Border XXI, Water Sub workgroups were established
  - C Met quarterly, alternating between sites in Mexico and the U.S.
  - C 3-4 week notification by fax, email and regular mail
  - C Topics were local, included field trips
  - C By-laws, agreement by consensus
  - C Projects developed at local level were funded
  - C Border 2012 proposal for 2 task forces along U.S.-Mexico border: Tijuana watershed (including Tecate and Tijuana Estuary) and Lower Colorado River (Mexicali/Imperial Valley, Yuma, NIP, SIP, Delta)
  - C Use watershed perspective to evaluate local projects, bring diverse local interests together to make proposals for longer term projects
  
- C Lauren Volpini (USEPA) U.S. Mexico Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Forces
  - o Two Task Forces were proposed to implement Goal #5 of Border 2012 - to reduce exposure to chemicals as a result of accidental chemical releases and/or acts of terroris:
    - o City of Mexicali/Imperial County, and
    - o City of Tijuana/City and County of San Diego.
  
  - C Mexicali/Imperial County: a proposed Task Force planning meeting was held yesterday (May 28) in Calexico. Proteccion Civil of the State of Baja, CA will head the Mexican delegation in cooperation with Profepa. Imperial County will head the US delegation. The development of a binational emergency preparedness and response plan is considered a Task Force priority. This priority meets Objective 2 of Border 2012's Goal #5 - that all designated Sister Cities have joint contingency plans in place and operating with the establishment of binational committees for chemical emergency prevention. The proposed Task Force steering committee is scheduled to meet in Mexicali in July.
  
  - C City of Tijuana/San Diego City and County: a proposed Task Force would be established upon the signing of the area's binational emergency preparedness and response plan, scheduled for October, 2003. The Plan's current Steering Committee will serve as the basis of a new Border 2012 Task Force. PROFEPA will continue to lead the Mexican delegation in cooperation with Proteccion Civil. The San Diego County Environmental Health Department's Hazardous Material Division will head the US delegation.

Ms Volpini introduced the following leaders of the proposed Task Forces:

- o Mr. Carrillo, Supervisor, Imperial County Board of Supervisors and former Mayor of Calexico, pledged his County's support and leadership for the newly proposed Mexicali/Imperial County Task Force. He emphasized the need to show respect for sovereignty of countries and of nations. He stressed the commonalities shared by the region, the need to address Tribal issues and remarked that only through cooperation and consideration can results be obtained. Chief Joe Buzo, Imperial County Fire Department will likely Co-Chair the Task Force on their behalf.
- o Raymundo Noriega, SubDelegado of Proteccion Civil de Baja California talked about the need to implement an emergency plan between Imperial Valley and Mexicali. He also said that Proteccion Civil personnel are willing and happy to work together with the other Mexican and US representatives so that the region can have a better quality of life for our citizens.
- o Michael Dorsey, Chief of the San Diego County Environmental Health Dept's Hazardous Materials Division, expressed the importance for these types of forums; as the industrial parks expand, both sides of the border must be prepared to respond. At present, San Diego can't conduct response actions into Mexico so improving response capability on both sides of the border is critical. Mr Dorsey, acknowledged and praised EPA's commitment to staff the Task Force's with Federal On Scene Coordinators, such as Craig Benson of EPA's Southern California region. This is especially important to San Diego since EPA will be the only US responders who will have the ability to cross the border to mitigate an incident.

## **15, Closing Comments**

- C Carlos de la Parra. SEMARNAT: General participation is most important, to form task forces that can work together for a common goal. How should we start forming them? We still are not sure, but with everybody's participation and following the criteria that we are working on, we will get to our goals. We have a lot of work ahead of us on Border 2012 but we are confident that we will succeed.
- C Jorge Escobar Martinez. Department of Ecology for the State of Baja California: Working together we will meet our goals. There is a lot of work to be done on how to apply the law, to make new laws that help us achieve our common vision of a clean environment. The Municipal Government of Tijuana, Tecate and Mexicali are committed to help in any way they can, to see that this is met.
- C Winston Hikcox, CAL-EPA: Border 2012, our first meeting, I hope that you got what you wanted from your attendance today. I look forward to what lies ahead in the implementation of B2012. Thank you for coming today.
- C Laura Yoshii, US-EPA: The input of local priorities and the formation of task forces are very helpful on our work. We need to identify new task forces that will want to work with us. Thank you again for coming today.